

The Swami



Trail Trash, Issue #97-2, March, 1997

The Swami hit 74% (111-38) of his picks in the first edition of *Trail Trash* for 1997. That marks a three game improvement over 1996. If the Swami had not done the big choke job in the district finals, it would have made the Swami even more unbearable than usual.

Before we go to the picks, the Swami has a bone to pick. Sine 1993, Northwest Ohio has hosted regional tournaments in all four divisions during odd numbered years. 1997 is no exception with Divisions I, II, and IV playing at the University of Toledo and Division III being contested at Bowling Green State University. One of the great experiences for a tournament junky is to see all four regional finals. Unfortunately, the Ohio High School Athletic Association does not see things the Swami's way and has scheduled the Division I final at UT for the same time as the Division III final at BGSU. What really toasts the Swami is that there are four regional finals scheduled at two sites in Dayton. There is no time conflict among those four finals. That is an outrage.

DIVISION I

Seven of the sixteen teams ranked in the final Associated Press have reached the original. A Lakewood St Edward team that the Swami thought was a year ahead of its time in 1996 is the only survivor from last year's final four. The potential exists for a great state tournament as the top five teams are still alive at the regional level.

Regional

University of Toledo: # 2 St Ed's leads the field at UT. The Eagles meet a Fremont Ross team thought to be making its first regional appearance ever. Look for Sam Clancy, Gino Bartolone, and the rest of the Eagles to dominate the Little Giants. In the other game, Toledo Central Catholic has already played several times at UT's Savage Hall and takes advantage of those friendly confines named after a Central grad to defeat Parma Val-

ley Forge. In the final, the Central squad that finished fifth in the Toledo City League gives Ed's all they can handle but the Eagles hold on for a return trip to the final four.

Canton Civic Center: This group features #5 Canton McKinley and # 10 Cleveland Heights. The McKinley-Heights tilt looks to be the championship game at first glance. Heights missed a 1996 trip to the final four after three consecutive appearances while McKinley has not been seen in Columbus since their 1992 encounter with Greg Simpson. That's a long drought for the Bulldogs so look for McKinley to nip Heights. Mentor beat previously undefeated Cleveland Glenville to qualify for the regional. Look for the Cardinals to slide by Akron Firestone. In the finals, its all McKinley.

Columbus Fairgrounds: This is the Swami's top regional with #1 Zanesville, #4 Galloway Westland, #12 Dayton Dunbar, and Columbus City League champ Independence. Look for Westland to take Dunbar while future Kansas Jayhawk Kenny Gregory leads Independence to an upset win over top ranked Zanesville in the other game. In the finals, Independence pulls off another upset with a win over Doug Davis and Westland.

University of Dayton: #3 Trotwood-Madison is the only ranked club in this regional. Cincinnati Aiken defeats Princeton in one game. Aiken already has a win over #9 Cincinnati Withrow in the tournament. In the second game, Andre Hutson and Trotwood-Madison are too much for 1995 state qualifier Springfield North. Trotwood-Madison has done in the Swami before but not in 1997 as they defeat Aiken to move to the state tournament .

STATE

Lakewood St. Edward's, Canton McKinley, Columbus Independence, and Trotwood Madison make up the big school field for 1997. Independence defeated two state ranked clubs in the regional to get to the final four but the

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76er's fall victims to St Ed's in game #3. In the nightcap, McKinley's tournament luck has not changed in their five year absence as the Bulldogs lose to Trotwood-Madison in overtime. In the final, Lakewood St Edward's brings home their first state basketball title with a win over Trotwood.

DIVISION II

Seven of the eighteen clubs ranked in the final AP poll have made it to the regional level. Only top ranked Kettering Alter has a chance to return to the state tourney as 1996 qualifiers Orrville, Ottawa-Glandorf, and Cambridge have fallen by the wayside.

REGIONAL

University of Akron: No standouts in this group with only one team, Akron Buchtel, having a chance to move out of the JAR with twenty wins under their belts. Canton South destroyed #5 Wooster Triway in the district and have just enough to squeak by the Griffins. The other semi-final sees Youngstown Cardinal Mooney stopping Lake Catholic. Mooney has a win over #6 Canfield in the and advances to Columbus with a hard fought win over Canton South.

University of Toledo: This strong regional includes #4 Olmsted Falls, #7 Cleveland Benedictine, and #16 Bellevue. The Benedictine Bengals make their second trip of the season to Toledo successful with a narrow win over the Elida Bulldogs. In the second game, a big Olmsted Falls team squares off against a big Bellevue team. Southwestern Conference teams in general and Olmsted

Falls in particular have historically struggled at UT. 1997 is no exception as the Redmen of Bellevue stop the Falls in a low scoring affair. In the finals, the Swami likes Benedictine's chances against Bellevue.

Ohio University: #3 Dover is the only ranked club at the Convo. Circleville entered the tourney at 6-14 and has added another four tournament wins to move to the regional but their magic carpet ride ends with a loss to Hillsboro. Dover's defense has carried them to a 23-1 season but the Tornadoes won't have enough "D" to stop Columbus Mifflin and Aaron Turner. In the final, the Punchers knock out Hillsboro and head to the big dance.

Wright State: A top notch regional with #1 Alter, #9 Roger Bacon, #12 Badin, and 21-3 but unranked Big Walnut. Look for 1982 "AAA" champ Roger Bacon and Eugene Land to have too much for Nuts in the first game. In the other game, Alter will defeat 1988 Division III champ Badin. The Swami really likes Roger Bacon's chances in the final but thinks that Alter's 1996 state tournament experience will carry the Knights to another final four.

STATE

Kettering Alter, Youngstown Cardinal Mooney, Columbus Mifflin, and Cleveland Benedictine make up this year's field. That will mean that tickets are not a problem as the seventy-fifth state boys tourney opens. Too many big city teams; too little support. In the first game, Alter will have no problem with Youngstown Mooney. In the second game, Mifflin squeezes by Benedictine. In the fi-

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nal, Kettering Alter will win their second state championship with a win over the Mifflin Punchers.

DIVISION III

The Swami may not pick one game correctly, but he does know one thing. If you make the trip to Columbus, get rid of your game twelves early. That is nothing against any of the Division III teams. That is a fact of life at the state tournament. Nine of the twenty-three ranked teams in the final AP poll are playing at the regional level. None of the final four from 1996 remain alive. The biggest news in Division III is that Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph has dropped from Division II in quest of their fifth state crown in the nineties.

Canton Fieldhouse: This group features #7 VA-SJ and #16 Liberty. In the first game, VA-SJ and Dale Thomas are too much for Louisville Aquinas to handle. The second game matches Liberty against 1994 Division III state champ Youngstown Ursuline. Liberty knocked off top ranked Warren JFK in the district while Ursuline recorded a district win against #6 East Palestine. Liberty prevails. In the final, Villa Angela-St. Joseph qualifies for another state tournament by defeating Liberty.

Bowling Green State University: #2 Ontario, #10 Patrick Remy, and #22 Lorain Clearview appear at the BG regional. The first game features NWOAL rivals PH and Evergreen. Evergreen is having their best season ever with the first sectional and district crowns in the school's history. PH creamed

the Vikings in a late season contest. This one might be a little closer but not much. In the second game, Ontario and Lorain Clearview match up in a dandy. Don't let the ratings fool you. The Swami is struggling with this pick but take Ontario over Clearview. In the final at Anderson Arena, look for Ontario to best PH.

Ohio University: #4 Chesapeake and #11 Shenandoah lead this field. 1993 Division III runner-up Belpre entered tourney play at 8-12 but has advanced to regional play with four wins highlighted by victories over North Adams and Alexander. Chesapeake will barely have enough but holds on to defeat Belpre. In the other contest, Bellaire takes an upset win over Shenandoah. In the final, the Swami likes Chesapeake over Bellaire.

University of Dayton: Dayton Christian (#5) and Marion Elgin (#12) are ranked clubs playing at UD. The first game is a good matchup between Dayton Christian and Elgin. Dayton Christian advances to the finals. In the second game, Johnstown Northridge faces an 11-13 Cincinnati Wyoming club. You have to go with Northridge in that affair. In the final, Dayton Christian advances to their first final four with a victory.

STATE

The 1996 Division III state tourney was as zany as ever. The state's three top-ranked Division III clubs all made it to the final four. Did any of them win the championship? I don't think so. Did the Miami East player release the shot after the final buzzer? I think so. Did the basket count? I think

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so Was there any possibility that the official was in error? I don't think so. Were people contacting state legislators regarding the outcome? Of course. Did Jim Marquette vacation this summer in Adams County? Let's stop this stupidity, this is 1997 and Cleveland VA-SJ's quest for another state title is the story. The Vikings join Chesapeake, Ontario, and Dayton Christian in the 1997 final four. Joe's won in Division I in 1991 and in Division II in 1992, 1994, and 1995. Look for VA-SJ over Chesapeake and Dayton Christian over Ontario in the semifinals. In the finals VA-SJ holds on for a close win over Dayton Christian.

DIVISION IV

Six of the fifteen teams ranked in the final AP poll have reached the regional level. Top ranked and undefeated Lincolnview is looking for a return trip to the final four as is defending state champ Springfield Catholic which has advanced to the regional level despite a losing record.

REGIONAL

Canton Fieldhouse: This regional features #2 Zanesville Rosecrans and #11 McDonald. The two state ranked teams match up in the regional opener. Look for Rosecrans to handily defeat McDonald. The nightcap features MAC-8 conference rivals Gilmour Academy and Cuyahoga Heights. Take the Heights in this one. Rosecrans closes out their trip to the regional win with an easy win over Cuyahoga Heights in the finale.

University of Toledo: #1 Lincolnview and #4 Leipsic top this field. Lincolnview did not dominate the district but advanced with a win over #9 Delphos St. John's. This is McComb's first trip to the regional since 1987 and the 1997 Panthers already have a win over #10 Patrick Henry (Division III). Lincolnview wins big. Leipsic stopped #6 Kalida in a district final and owns an early season victory over the Holgate Tigers. The Vikings win again. The Lancers and Vikings square off before a huge crowd in the final. Lincolnview returns to Columbus with a win over Leipsic.

Fairgrounds Coliseum: #7 Worthington Christian, #14 Franklin Furnace Green, traditional power St. Henry, and 22-2 Norwalk St. Paul make up this field. In the opener, Worthington Christian's three point shooting is too much for Norwalk St. Paul. Look for St. Henry to defeat one of the Swami's personal favorites, Franklin Furnace Green in game two. The final matches the outside marksmanship of WC against the size of St. Henry, St. Henry wins the regional championship in a mild upset.

University of Dayton: No ranked teams at the U ofD but this regional does include 1996 state champ Springfield Catholic. The Swami picks Anna to defeat Newton in the opener. The second game features 10-13 Springfield Catholic against Franklin-Monroe. Springfield Catholic opened tournament play with a twenty-six point victory over #2 Southeastern while F-M dropped #8 Jack-

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son Center in the district. This will be close but go with Franklin-Monroe. In the final, go with Franklin-Monroe.

STATE

#1 Lincolnview and #2 Zanesville Rosecrans are joined by St. Henry and Franklin-Monroe in Columbus. Look for Rosecrans to defeat Franklin-Monroe in one semi final with Lincolnview dropping St. Henry in the other Friday game. Last year, Lincolnview was undefeated before losing to the Jaxons and Springfield Catholic in the championship game. This year, Lincolnview caps off a perfect season as the trio of Brandon Pardon, Wes Dudgeon, and Chad Pollock are too much for Rosecrans.

The Swami selects Lakewood St. Edward's in Division I, Kettering Alter in Division II, Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph in Division III, and Lincolnview in Division IV as 1997 state champs. Game eleven will be the hottest tournament ticket.